



Exercise 4.11

Event Planning



This exercise is an opportunity to review and apply a variety of communication concepts. If your agency or community is thinking about putting on an event (festival, show, fair, etc.), this may be a good chance to engage your participants in planning for it. This exercise can also help participants plan a workshop, a campaign, or any other communication tool.

Objective: Participants will be able to develop a communication plan for a community event.

Materials:

Flip charts, markers, and tape
Overhead transparencies and markers
Timeline
Fact Sheet 4.11: Planning a Communication Program
Presentation 4.5
Handout 1: Timeline

Time: 60 minutes

1. Explain that agency staff are often asked to develop or contribute to community events, like the Umatilla Bear Festival (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) or Yesteryear (Texas Forest Service). Your participants may be called upon to coordinate a booth or exhibit at a state fair or community festival, or may want to organize their own event, like a Firewise house demonstration at a local home and garden center. Introduce the outreach planning process in ***Fact Sheet 4.11: Planning a Communication Program*** with ***Presentation 4.5***.
2. Ask the group to suggest a theme and location for a community event that they could participate in. This is Step 1 in the Program Planning model. If they are not forthcoming, suggest a Firewise, growth management, water conservation, urban forest, invasive plant, or endangered species theme. This exercise will allow them to plan this event together.
3. Ask the group to brainstorm the categories of things that need to be addressed in a plan to pull off such an event. Suggest that they use the fact sheet if they need ideas or more information. Some suggested steps in the process include the following:
 - Audience analysis
 - Objectives
 - Site preparation and logistics (location, maps, parking, bathrooms, food, first aid, etc.)
 - Publicity (news media, targeted announcements)
 - Volunteers (recruitment and training)

- Handouts and materials to distribute
 - Presentations and activities to conduct
 - Partner organizations and agencies
4. It will probably be simpler if the large group works together to agree on Step 3: Goals and Objectives. Then everyone can think about the same type of activity. What is the purpose of the activity? What do you want people to do differently as a result of their attendance? Write one or two good objectives together.
 5. Divide the group into the number of categories they generated and ask each group to tackle one topic. Using the fact sheet, they should develop a plan that includes who does what, when, what should be taken into account, etc. The sample plan included in this exercise is a starting point. You may wish to post it on a flip chart or slide. Given more time and knowledge of the community, participants should be able to fill in more details. Distribute *Handout 1: Timeline*.
 6. As the groups present their ideas, ask the participants to design a timeline for their plan. Which group must complete its plan before the next and which can occur simultaneously? It may be helpful if you draw a large timeline on a chalkboard and ask each group to fill in its tasks. Ask them where their plan fits in the larger event planning process.

Summary

Planning skills are important for a number of different activities, including communicating with your target audience. Good planning can lead to more successful outcomes, better relationships with partners, more participation from the community, and greater awareness of your message.

A sample group plan: The Volunteers—Fits into Step 5 (Plan) and 6 (Implementation)

1. Identify what tasks we need volunteers to do
 - Before the event
 - During the event
 - After the event
2. Identify where we can find these volunteers
 - Partnering organizations
 - Community members
 - Youth groups and civic associations
3. Identify what volunteers need to know to do their job well
 - What training is needed
 - Who will conduct the training
 - What materials and resources are needed for a training program
4. Identify what is needed to acknowledge volunteer efforts (and keep them volunteering!)
 - Recognition and awards
 - Thank-you's

Handout 1: Timeline

Time	Tasks	Who
Six months before event		
Five months before event		
Four months before event		
Three months before event		
Two months before event		
Six weeks before event		
Five weeks before event		
Four weeks before event		
Three weeks before event		

Time	Tasks	Who
Two weeks before event		
One week before event		
Two days before event		
One day before event		
The Day		
The Day After		
The week after		
Six months after		